

ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Kelli Jo Amador

Grade 11

West Jordan, UT

"A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform." -

Diane Mariechild

Although all women have extraordinary abilities, there are some whose lives hold a greater impact on their surroundings and lives of others. Emma Smith is one of these women. Emma Smith is most likely known for her marriage to Joseph Smith; the prophet of the Mormon Church. Emma was born on July 10th in 1804 and died April 30th, 1879. During her 75 years Emma was a mother, a wife, and one of the greatest humanitarians in modern history. Emma Smith's life has created a ripple effect that continues to touch lives profoundly and affect people across the world.

The women that have had an impact on my life all share one common occupation; they are all someone's mother. When I look at Emma Smith, I don't just see someone's wife or just a notable humanitarian. I see her as a mother. During her marriage to Joseph Smith Emma gave birth 7 times. The first three children did not live past infancy, all died at birth or hours after. After her second miscarriage, Emma and Joseph adopted twins whose mother had died in childbirth. Emma received the twins only nine days after her own personal tragedy. The ability to recover emotionally in order to care for and accept the lives of her new twins Joseph and Julia gives me more respect for Emma than when first encountered.

Emma was not only an amazing mother because of her acceptance and love in extending her family. She was also supportive to all her children. In her later years she traveled with her son Joseph III, to support him in his decision to follow in his fathers footsteps. Joseph III's father, Emma's husband died because of what he believed. After losing her husband in such an unjust way, Emma still supported her son despite the danger it entailed.

I know what it's like to have a supportive mother. My own mother has supported myself and my sister through any dreams that come our way. Because of this I know that Emma Smith had an impact on her children's lives just by being there as their mom.

If you live in Utah, the last name of "Smith" is usually associated with the founder and prophet of the Mormon Church, Joseph Smith. Emma was in fact Joseph's first wife, but we should not let all of his accomplishments overshadow hers. Through Emma's dedication and support she helped Joseph translate the Golden plates into The Book of Mormon, a document that has influenced the lives of countless people across the world. Emma is one of the few people who had witnessed the plates under a cloth, noting the metallic sounds, their weight, and their inscriptions by touch. Emma's own beliefs on temperance and tobacco may have affected Joseph's prayer, and eventually "The Word of Wisdom" resulted. The effect that Emma had on her husband branched out to have an effect on the Mormon religion.

In the quote by Diane Mariechild one of the abilities listed is the ability to transform. Emma Smith exceeded herself in this ability when she worked with others to

create the Relief Society. The Relief Society was one of the first all women societies devoted to charity and helping others. The society was small at first, but now it has grown to include over 5.2 million women in over 170 countries. Emma's humanitarianism was infectious, and still thrives within modern-day members of the Relief Society. By helping with this society, Emma empowered women for the good of the entire world. The society's motto is "Charity Never Faileth."

My grandmother is a member of this society. She's proud of all that this society has done to help the world. The society has sent care packages to third world countries, ran charities for the less fortunate, and they also aid people in their own communities when they need help. When I was younger the Relief Society made dinner for my family after my mother was on bed rest from surgery. Because of this simple act, I learned that small things matter. This society empowers and mobilizes women across the world to do more for people everywhere.

It's amazing how one life can reach across time to affect the lives of millions of other people. Emma Smith's life planted a seed of humanitarianism that has rippled across the world without her knowledge; but to me she was more than just a humanitarian. Emma Smith was also a wife and a mother. For the time period that she lived in, the accomplishments that she achieved as a woman are miraculous. Emma Smith impacted her community, her family, and ultimately, the world.

Kendra Francis
Grade 9
Hooper, UT

Intercepting Fumbled Values

"Talent, power, strength and gender."

Wait, what? Gender? Yeah, that question is probably running through your mind right about now. This is exactly what my parents and I were thinking right after we heard the shocking words of the junior high football coach saying "I'm sorry. Maybe, next year." But no, I didn't just stop there. I went on to fight my defense.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was a woman that also didn't take no for an answer. Elizabeth and I are a lot alike. She is believed to be a driving force behind the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention even though she was not allowed her seat because she was a woman. She also played a leadership role for 50 years in the woman's rights movement, writing many key speeches. Like her, I feel responsible for my own rights and privileges as well as for the girls around me. This all started with my disagreeing with the choice of another, sticking up for what I believe in and not backing down until I was heard.

"I'm better than half the boys on the team," I explained. *I worked harder than anyone*, I thought in my mind as I heard the long sigh from the coach. He sympathized "You know you're a fantastic athlete and you didn't make it because many people tried out for the same position, and had more talent." And that's pretty much when the whole gender topic came up.

I do understand that football was originally a guy sport but this is 2007. I assumed from the beginning that it would be harder for me to make the team than a short-skinny-

weak-flimsy-little kid not even trying out. But the biggest surprise came when we were at tryouts and I actually fit in and was considered good, even better, for that matter. And not only was I better but I was different. The boys on the team even accepted me, and some were intimidated that a girl was going to make it and they weren't. When I didn't make it, even the coach was surprised that it meant so much to everyone. Many of the players questioned the coach's judgment, just like I did.

Elizabeth too had experienced a great disappointment because of her gender. Her brother, Eleazar, died in 1826. Elizabeth remembered trying to comfort her father, saying that she would try to be all her brother had been. Her father's response: "Oh, my daughter, I wish you were a boy!"

I am inspired by Elizabeth's words in her famous Declaration of Sentiments speech presented at the first women's rights convention held in 1848 in Seneca Falls:

"The world has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, because in the degradation of woman the very fountains of life are poisoned at their source. ... It is the wise mother that has the wise son. So long as your women are slaves you may throw your colleges and churches to the winds."

I hope to put up a similar fight, whenever I get the chance in my own life. I have resolved to make my voice heard by fighting for what I believe in and not backing down. My experience has helped me to appreciate my own abilities. I am going to continue to be the best that I can be and to show others that nothing is going to hold me back, especially not my gender. I believe that women are more important than most people think. Just like in a fumbled play in football, I hope to intercept this problem.